

Fraser River/Lummi Indian Fishery Sockeye Salmon

Date of Declaration/Determination: November 13, 2002

Location: Fraser River area of Washington

Cause: Due to natural disaster of unknown causes that resulted in extremely low returns of salmon to the regions.

Authority: Sec 312(a) of MSA

Appropriation: None to date

Assistance Provided: None to date

SUMMARY

Determination of Commercial Fishery Failure under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for Fraser River Sockeye Salmon

- The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, has determined that a commercial failure occurred in the Fraser River sockeye salmon fishery in the years 1999 and 2001. The salmon originate in the Fraser River in British Columbia and are harvested in Puget Sound.
- The determination for the 1999 fishing year was requested by the Governor of Washington, and for 2001 by the Lummi Indian Business Council. The requests were handled together, and are both covered under this determination.
- The cause of the commercial failure was a fishery resource disaster of undetermined, but probably natural, causes. Possible causes of the sharp decline in sockeye runs include poor marine survival, El Nino effects, unfavorable in-river migration environment, and the early entry of late-run sockeye into freshwater. The sockeye harvest for 1999 was the lowest on record, only 20,000 fish, compared to an expected Treaty-adjusted harvest of about 1.2 million fish. The 2001 harvest level was almost as low.
- Ex-vessel revenue losses for the two years, after adjusting for allocation and market factors, were estimated to be \$14 million.
- The determination clears the way for funds to be used in accordance with section 312(a) to address the commercial fishery failure; however, funds have not been appropriated to date.